FILOZOFIA
Roč. 66, 2011, č. 4

ANTOINE BERMAN'S PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION: THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSLATING WITHOUT PLATONISM

HYANG LEE – SEONG-WOO YUN, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea

LEE HYANG – YUN SEONG-WOO: Antoine Berman's Philosophical Reflections on Language and Translation: The Possibility of Translating without Platonism
FILOZOFIA 66, 2011, No 4, p. 336

The paper surveys the problem of language and translation in Antoine Berman's pioneering achievements. This French philosopher of translation was deeply influenced not only by Schleiermacher, who affirmed the unity of thought and expression, but also by Benjamin, who drew attention to the formalism of language. In Berman's view the essence of language lies in signifiers and letters. He criticized the Platonic view of language and translation which endows non-sensual, mental, and universal elements, with a higher ontological status. Thus Berman proposed a modern theory of translation without Platonism. Meanings can be realized through and within letters not only in the source language, but also in the target language. In this sense, Berman's philosophy of translation clearly reflects "the achievements of modern semiotics" (P. Ricœur). The paper criticizes the conception of translation as trapped within the logic of identity, which ignores the differences between, and the multiplicity of, languages as a result of a deep-rooted drive to obtain a universal meaning. The paper shows that Berman's philosophy reflects and accepts this multiplicity allowing thereby the logic of difference/otherness to flourish in translation.

Keywords: Platonism – A. Berman – Translation – Language – Signifier – Signified – Letter – Sense – Multiplicity

I. Increasing Attention to Language and Translation since the Twentieth Century. Since the turn of the twentieth century, there is probably no subject matter in the humanities that has received as much attention as language. Language has been discussed not only in linguistics but also in fields such as literature, psychoanalysis, religious studies, anthropology, and Translation Studies. Philosophy is not an exception; not only Wittgenstein and Heidegger, but all other modern philosophers had an unceasing interest in language.

Although here we are dealing with language, there are important differences in the ways in which philosophy and other fields treat it. Generally speaking, the humanities (except for philosophy) focus on the characteristics of individual languages and the culture in which they are embedded. By contrast, philosophy attempts to grasp not individual languages, but language at an abstract level, the thing as an object of reference, and universal meanings that exist independently of individual languages. The word "language" in Wittgenstein's statement "[t]he limits of my language mean the limits of my world" refers

to language in general, not to any individual natural language (*langue*) such as Korean, English, or French.[1] This is probably due to philosophy's propensity to go beyond the physical and search after the metaphysical.

Setting philosophy aside, we can consider linguistics and Translation Studies to be those fields that study language as an individual entity with respect to the relationship between the language, its users, and its community. Recently, Translation Studies have been gaining autonomy rapidly. Early Translation Studies directly adopted scholarly achievements mostly from applied linguistics, that is, the scholarly methodology of comparative and contrasting linguistics *en masse*. This is because, to our knowledge, they thought that grasping the identity of and differences between individual languages would contribute to the understanding of the activity of translation.

However, there have been some attempts to reconcile these two conflicting approaches to language. A small number of scholars have provided philosophical reflections on translation on the basis of translating experiences involving concrete languages, and Antoine Berman (1942-1991),[2] who is closely examined in this paper, was one of them. Berman was a professional translator who translated Schleiermacher's core work *On the Different Methods of Translating* (*Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*) into French.[3] He was also an unusual philosopher of translation who elevated his own translating experiences up to the level of philosophical reflections. Berman successfully pointed out that translation should never be studied within an isolated realm of Translation Studies but that it should be understood in its complex, multiple, and interdisciplinary aspects through philosophy and many other fields.[4] Therefore, it was by observing the phenomenon of translation between individual languages, not by first tackling the theme of translation through language at the level of universality, that Berman tried to divulge the essence of translation (narrowly speaking) and the essence of language (broadly speaking). In this regard, we believe that it is worthwhile to reconstruct and reexamine Berman's thoughts. Berman was deeply influenced by Schleiermacher, who claimed the unity of thought and expression, and by Benjamin, who drew attention to the formalism of language and believed that the essence of language lies in signifiers and letters. He also criticized the Platonic view of language and translation that places greater ontological emphasis on non-sensual, mental, and universal elements. Berman actively explored modern possibilities of translation theory without Platonism. In this paper, we investigate how Berman

---

[1] Wittgenstein, L.: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, intro. by Bertrand Russell, Routledge, 2003, p. 68.

[2] We can consider *L'épreuve de L'étranger* (1984) as Berman's most important work. In addition, there is a collection of his lectures *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain* (1999) and his posthumous work *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne* (1995), which address the problem of translation. *L'épreuve de l'étranger* was translated into English and published in 1992. Its English title is *The Experience of the Foreign*, trans. by S. Heyvaert, State University of New York, 1992.

[3] Schleiermacher, F. *Des différentes méthodes du traduire et autre texte*, trans. by Berman, Editions du Seuil, 1999.

[4] For further details, please see the "Conclusion" of *L'épreuve de l'étranger*.

approached the essence of language through the phenomenon of "translation" and explore the kind of philosophical and translational significance that Berman's study implies.

II. Debates before Berman: Schleiermacher and Benjamin. Many philosophers and *literati* have discussed the problem of translation since antiquity.[5] However, F. Schleiermacher and W. Benjamin had the greatest influence on Berman. In his major work *The Experience of the Foreign*, Berman refers to Schleiermacher's *On the Different Methods of Translating* as "the only study of that period in Germany to constitute a systematic and methodical approach of translation"[6] and introduces his own philosophy of translation in detail within the framework of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. In a book[7] in which he intensively expounds his philosophy of translation, Berman analyzes Benjamin's intuitive and creative reflections on translation in detail. However, because discussing the vast scholarship of these two philosophers in detail is beyond the scope of the present paper, we simply address a number of things directly related to Berman's philosophy of translation.

We first examine the relationship between Schleiermacher and Berman. Schleiermacher is well known as the philosopher who inspired translation theorists such as Berman and Venuti and who championed the so-called "source text-oriented approach." However, this limited view of Schleiermacher's influence overlooks one important point that his philosophy implies. Schleiermacher distinguished translation from interpreting, and whereas he considered the acts of translation in industry to be "mere interpreting" (*Dolmetschen*), he viewed those in the arts and sciences to be "genuine translation" (*Übersetzen*). However, what is more important here is the criterion that he suggests for defining the essence of translation. That is, even if the text has industry-related content, it is closer to "translation" if the (original) author intervened with his free imagination and creativity. By contrast, no matter how artistic and scientific a text may be, it is closer to "interpreting" if it contains visible objects and immediately definable things and circumstances.[8] Further, the question of how far the translator (*sujet traduisant*) should arbitrate in translation depends on how far the original author intervened in his text. For example, if the original author was closely involved in the language of the original text, the translator should also vivify his profound understanding of the author's subjectivity in the language of his translation. His famous dichotomy of "taking the reader towards the author" or "bringing the author towards the reader" clearly indicates that Schleiermacher chose the former. Further, the task of "taking the reader towards the author" is given to the translator as a subject who translates. Posing the question as to a subject who translates, Schleiermacher raises the translation-ethical problem of "how to receive the language of the other." It coincides with the ethics of translation in Berman. Translation as a space for

[5] Concerning this, see Robinson, D. *Western Translation Theory: from Herodotus to Nietzsche*, St. Jerome Pub. 2002.

[6] Berman, A. *The Experience of the Foreign*, p. 144.

[7] Berman, A. *L'âge de la traduction - La tâche du traducteur de Walter Benjamin. Un commentaire*, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2008.

[8] Schleiermacher, F. *Des différentes méthodes du traduire et autre texte*, p. 35.

the foreign things and as a de-centered, not ethnocentric, space in Berman is not different from translation as "taking the reader towards the author" in Schleiermacher. Furthermore, an obvious link between Schleiermacher and Berman is indicated by Schleiermacher's statement that "the author's thought […] is *one* with his discourse" (*la pensée, qui est une avec le discours*).[9] Thus, the two philosophers share the Romantic idea that the author's subjectivity is condensed in his thought and his thought cannot exist apart from his expressions (discourse). The concept of the author's own expression or discourse is related to the concept of the letter in Berman later on.

We now turn to Benjamin. Summarizing the relationship between Benjamin and Berman in a couple of sentences would disregard the influence of *Wirkungsgeschichte* on these two philosophers. Most noteworthy is that both Benjamin's doctoral dissertation[10] and Berman's major work *The Experience of the Foreign* take German Romanticism as the main theme of investigation. Of course, this does not imply that Benjamin and Berman share the same understanding of translation in every aspect. However, we can easily discover traces of Benjamin's thoughts in Berman's important conceptions and intuitions. We summarize their shared ideas as follows.

First, Berman and Benjamin both prefer the concept of "translatability" (*tradusibilité*, *Übersetzbarkeit*) over the hackneyed concept of "linguistic translatability" (*traductibilité*).[11] Here "translatability" refers to the question of whether a work is worthy of translation, whereas "linguistic translatability" refers to the empirical question of whether we can find an appropriate translator.

Second, both harshly criticize the widespread public idea that translation is nothing but a mere act of communication. According to their shared argument, considering translation to be only a means of information conveyance and communication represents an extremely functionalistic approach that excludes the cultural, historical, and philosophical significance of translation.

Third, Berman and Benjamin both think that translation goes beyond a mere communication means serving the reader ignorant of the original text; they think that translation lets the reader pay attention to the original text itself and pursues the mission of vivifying and extending the life of the original text. They think that a translation could reach the point where the original text was meant to reach.

Their arguments can be summarized by the relationships between the identical and the other, between the original text and the translation, and between the mother tongue and the language of the translation. In their own way, both Berman and Benjamin try to oppose the traditional prejudice that the translation is ontologically inferior to the original text because it comes temporally and empirically at a later point in time.

III. Critical Assessment of Plato's Philosophy of Language. There should be no great objections to the claim that Berman's work belongs to the so-called "philosophical

[9] Ibid. p. 39.
[10] *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik*, 1920.
[11] Berman, A. *The Experience of the Foreign*, p. 126.

reflections on translation" or the "philosophy of translation" schools of thought. Then what about the "philosophy of language"? If we define the philosophy of language as "a systematic and consistent reflection on language," we can surely argue that Berman's thoughts contain elements of the philosophy of language. Then what kind of philosophy of language? At this point, we should consider Berman's paper[12] in which his reflections on language are thoroughly outlined. However, we should not make a hasty inference simply by the title of the paper. Although the title "L'essence platonicienne de la traduction" suggests otherwise, Plato never explicitly mentioned the essence of translation. However, Berman closely analyzes how Plato's metaphysics influenced modern conceptions of language and translation that distinguish between the sensual and the intellectual and between the individual and the universal. Berman's analysis is as follows.

Plato's metaphysics distinguishes between the sensual and the non-sensual, the individual and the universal, the body and the soul. Thus, from the perspective of Platonism, every natural language is composed of sensual and non-sensual parts. In fact, such dualism is nothing new; it appears throughout Plato's metaphysics. What is significant here is the fact that Platonism endows a higher ontological status to the non-sensual than to the sensual. The essence of the philosophical enterprise in Plato lies in moving from the former to the latter.[13] If we apply this to language, the sensual in language may be represented by sounds and letters (*le son et la lettre*) and the non-sensual by the acts of signification and meanings (*la signification et le sens*).[14] If we consider language and translation in the context of Platonism to search for the universal and the invariable, we see that non-sensual "meanings" are superior to sensual "sounds" and "letters" and that, despite the plurality of natural languages, "the invariable and eternal" are meanings, not sounds and letters. In other words, only signifieds that exist independently of individual languages are postulated to exist universally, whereas signifiers are not considered to be genuine objects of investigation because they are too particular and different between languages. After all, linguistic signs sharing identical signifieds may be exchanged or replaced by a wide range of signifiers. This is the crux of the philosophy of language based on Platonism.

What we have thus far expounded on is only Berman's own presumption of Plato's philosophy of language and translation on the basis of his metaphysics. However, the importance of Berman's reflections lies in constructing his philosophy of translation on the basis of such a critical reexamination of Plato's metaphysics.

Translation is carried out within language or, more precisely, "through" language. Therefore, the way we perceive language must influence the way we perceive translation. Then what happens if we apply such a Platonic view of language to translation?

First, Platonism postulates that a variety of natural languages' skins and appearances

[12] Berman, A. "L'essence platonicienne de la traduction", *Revue d'esthétique* 12, 1986, pp. 63-73.

[13] In this paper, Plato's philosophy of language is a discussion about Plato's views on language and translation in general that we infer from his general metaphysics, not about whether the relationship between words and things is conventional or essential, as in *Cratylus*.

[14] Berman, A. "L'essence platonicienne de la traduction", p. 64.

are doomed to perish and that the invariable elements of language as meanings are likely to remain. Therefore, the task of translation consists of nothing more than divesting the language of all its particular, accidental elements, thus allowing the invariable, universal meanings to remain. A translator should dig up *the* meaning embedded in a language and express it with certain signifiers from another language. According to the Platonic theory of translation, the mission of translation lies in paying attention to the individuality and particularity of concrete natural languages as well as in going beyond (*meta, trans/tra*) them to dig out universal "meanings." Therefore, Berman's view of the Platonic translation to be "translation as meta-physical movement"[15] is fully justified.

Second, the Platonic view of language cannot appreciate the proper relationship between signifieds and signifiers within the original text. This is a necessary consequence of the aforementioned Platonism. Following the Platonic logic, we can conclude that, whether in the source or target text, signifieds and signifiers are separable from each other. However, Berman pays close attention to the fact that meanings within the source text are closely attached to letters and that the source text as a literary work (*oeuvre*) is something non-repeatable, peculiar, unique, and irreplaceable. More-over, Berman points out that once we accept the Platonic viewpoint that signifieds and signifiers are separable, we may neglect the uniqueness of the original text, that is, the unique ways in which meanings are coupled with letters in the text. Nobody, not even Kafka, wrote *Metamorphosis* more than once. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, meanings and letters are so deeply welded that we cannot even imagine another *Hamlet*. According to Berman, the source text is regulated by a certain set of "laws of letters" in which signifieds and signifiers are coupled in their own unique ways.

IV. Berman's Philosophy of Language and Translation. About poetry, Hegel states that the spirit "has speech only as a means of communication or as an external reality out of which […] it has withdrawn into itself from the very start." Therefore, "in the case of poetry proper it is a matter of indifference whether we read it or hear it read; it can even be translated into other languages without essential detriment to its value, and turned from poetry into prose, and in these cases it is related to quite different sounds from those of the original."[16] Hegel's argument that a certain meaning or content does not need to be conveyed through a certain definite form of language means that linguistic forms and genres are secondary in the conveyance of meanings. We can examine Hegel's argument from the perspective of Platonism that claims, at least at the level of Translation Studies, that the essence of language lies in its meanings and content, not in its linguistic forms and signifiers. According to Hegel, it is no problem at all to replace linguistic forms to convey *the* meanings, that is, it is no problem at all to discard the body for the sake of the soul.

[15] Ibid. p. 70.

[16] Hegel, G. W. F. *Hegel's Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art Vol. II*, trans. by T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 964.

Deleuze once proclaimed that the task of modern philosophy is to "overturn Platonism" (*renversement du platonisme*).[17] Such efforts have been undertaken in the realm of modern semiotics. That is, since Saussure, no one has supposed that signifiers are inferior to signifieds. We now believe that even the arbitrariness of linguistic signs is due to the variety and individuality of signifiers.

Ricoeur reflects hermeneutically on Berman's achievements in Translation Studies. He states that Berman, together with Meschonnic, did not ignore but received "the achievement of contemporary semiotics" thoroughly.[18] What does this mean? The achievement of contemporary semiotics that Ricoeur refers to is none other than the awareness of "a unity of meaning and sound, of the signified and the signifier[.]"[19] What is the meaning of this unity, which he does not explain in detail? It means that a sound is not simply the holder or mediator of a meaning; instead, a proper meaning is realized and preserved *only* through a sound or a signifier. A meaning is a free-floating entity that is unified with, not separated from, sounds. If we were to go beyond the argument of meaning-sound unity, we could argue that some signifieds are realizable only through certain signifiers. Such arguments are often misconstrued to support the impossibility of translation (in literary genres such as poetry); however, they are actually meant to point out the fact that signifiers and signifieds are solidly united, not separable.

Then what kind of "modern" study or theory of translation does Berman establish? Did Berman, who critically analyzes the theory of language and translation based on Platonism, try to establish an "Aristotelian" theory of translation that rehabilitates the individual and the concrete? Let us rephrase the question by parodying the title of Berman's own choice. After all, what is the Bermanian essence of translation? There can be many ways to answer this question, but here we examine how Berman addresses these issues in his discussion of the Platonic view of language and translation.

To determine how he understands the meaning-sound unity, we need to examine his views on language and translation hidden in his works. However, it is difficult to determine such views because although Berman provides many clues throughout his works, he never gives a consistent, systematic explanation. Although Berman's works truly presuppose the unity of signifier and signified, he never deals with "language-in-itself" or the essence of language *per se*. Berman is always interested in concrete languages that exist in a variety of ways. Steiner states that "[e]ach human language maps the world differently" and that "[e]ach tongue construes a set of possible worlds and geographies of remembrance […and] [w]hen a language dies, a possible world dies with it[.]"[20] This statement vindicates the plurality and diversity of individual languages. Along this line of

[17] Deleuze, G. *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 59; *Différence et Répétition*, P.U.F, 1968, p. 82.

[18] Ricoeur, P. *On Translation*, trans. by Eileen Brennan, Routledge, 2006, p. 38; *Sur la traduction*, Bayard, 2004, p. 68.

[19] Ibid. p. 38.

[20] Steiner, G. *After Babel - aspects of language & translation*, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. xiv.

thought, Berman also objects to looking at language simply as a system of communication and thus is concerned about issues such as the loss of the thickness of language, the impoverishment of colloquial creativity, and the death of dialects. Unlike Deleuze, however, Berman does not consider language simply as a space of struggle in which only the power of its speakers matters.[21] For Berman, *the* language does not exist, but there exist many individual languages (*des langues*). Vindicating their difference is one of the most important themes of Berman's work. His reference to translation as "the experience of the foreign" does not necessarily imply pains and obstacles in the process of translation. Instead, the foreign rescues us from our propensity to isolate ourselves and be content with the domestic. Further, it makes us realize what is missing in us and thereby fulfills it.

Finally, we arrive at Berman's theory of translation, that is, the "translation of the letter" (*traduction-de-la-lettre*).[22] As we have seen thus far, the theory of translation based on Platonism regards the signified (meaning) to be separable from the signifier (letter) and goes on to discard the signifier for the sake of obtaining the universal signified. By contrast, Berman's translation of the letter claims that the translation of a meaning is fully realizable through the translation of a letter without giving up the meaning. Furthermore, according to Berman, the translation of the letter is nearer to the essence of language. Berman does not provide a concrete, systematic explanation of his translation of the letter. He only gives examples.[23] Berman gives Hölderlin's translation of the *Antigone*, Klossowski's translation of the *Aeneid* as examples of the translation of the letter. For example, consider Hölderlin's translation of verse 20 of the *Antigone*.

τί δ'έστι; δηλοις γάρ τι καλχαίνουσ' έ`πος.

Was ist's, du scheinst ein rotes Wort zu färben
(What is it? You seem to paint a purple word.)[24]

Berman underscores Hölderlin's efforts to keep the literality of Καλξαινα intact.[25] By contrast, Mazon translates this sentence into French as follows:

De quoi s'agit-il donc? Quelque propos te tourmente, c'est clair (Les Belles Lettres, 1967)
(What's the matter; something is bothering you, clearly)[26]

There is a clear difference between the meaning-oriented French translation and

[21] Deleuze, G. *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 75.
[22] Berman, A. *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain*, Editions du Seuil, 1999, p. 25.
[23] Concerning this, see Berman, A. *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain*, Editions du Seuil, 1999.
[24] Berman, A. *The Experience of the Foreign*, p. 167.
[25] Berman, A, *L'épreuve de l'étranger*, p. 267.
[26] Berman, A. *The Experience of the Foreign*, p. 167.

Hölderlin's German translation that keeps the literality intact. The word "literal," the adjective of the word "letter," usually implies a "word-for-word" translation. However, as we have seen thus far, the "literal" translation in Berman cannot be taken immediately as a "word-for-word" translation. The translation of the letter contrasts with the meaning-oriented translation. A meaning-oriented translation grasps only signifieds from the source language and translates them, but it does not take into account the foreign letters in the source text. In other words, the meaning-oriented translation refuses to take the foreign into the target language (the mother tongue) and thereby maneuvers the text into something that does not disobey the mother tongue. In this sense, a meaning-oriented translation can guarantee the primacy and holiness of the target language. By contrast, Berman believes that a literary work (*oeuvre*) incessantly retreats from our grasp of meanings. Therefore, we could say that Berman's theory of translation is more about going beyond the translation of meanings than about renouncing or negating it to reach the translation of the letter. It could go beyond Platonism and open up a new horizon for translation. After all, the translation of the letter is a kind of translation that makes the soul and flesh of language – elements of the meaning and the form, respectively – altogether viable. According to Berman, working on "letters" is "neither copying, nor simulating, but paying attention to the plays between signifiers[.]"[27] The plays of signifiers arise for the first time only in the source language, that is, in the original text. Therefore, the translator should first and foremost pay attention to the forms (*formes*) of signifiers in the original text in which signifieds are solidly interlocked. After he has grasped such plays in the original text, he must determine the linguistic means by which to realize such plays again within the target text. Here, signifiers do not indicate the elements immanent in a natural language, such as phonemes, morphemes, and the lexicon. It is very difficult to translate such elements within a natural language into those in another natural language. The relationship or structure between different signifiers, not phonemes or morphemes, should be revived in the target text by the translator. Finally, let us examine a key example of the translation of the letter in Berman. In his own French translation of Roas Bastos's novel *Moi, Le Suprême*, Berman translates a Spanish proverb as follows:

A cada día le basta su pena, a cada año su daño.

A chaque jour suffit sa peine, à chaque anneé sa déveine.[28]
(Sufficient unto the day is the pain, sufficient unto the year the evil.)

Berman replaces the double rhymes *día*/*pena*, *año*/*daño* in the original Spanish with a different rhyme *peine*/*déveine* in French and thus translates the rhyme structure in the original into a new form.

After all, Berman's philosophy of language, which values the variety of individual languages, and his theory of translation, which aims for the translation of the letter, are clo-

[27] Berman, A. *La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain*, p. 14.
[28] Ibid. p. 14.

sely related. The aforementioned achievement of modern linguistics, that is, the acknowledgement that signifieds never subsist separately from signifiers, is based on the understanding that all elements of the source text are solidly interlocked with one another. In this sense, Benjamin already grasped the essence of language when he objected to the "reproduction of meanings" and claimed that translation should be a thorough "reproduction of forms."[29]

V. Conclusion: Beyond the Logic of the Same, Towards the Logic of the Oth. Berman's theory of translation tries to actively affirm the sensual, fleshy elements of language. By contrast, the Platonic theory of translation tries to compensate for the lack of the sensual and the concrete with a surplus of meanings. After all, this Platonic theory views language and translation simply as a set of meanings and a means by which they are conveyed, and thus, it affirms only a limited set of a language's special elements and does not take a language as it is in its entirety. That is, the mother tongue stays the same and delimits other languages as it receives them. Therefore, the Platonic theory of translation reproduces the logic of the same (*logique du même*) again in the realm of translation. Along the same line of thought, the translator remains a mere communicator of meanings and we cannot deny that a translation is secondary or auxiliary to the original text. This can be a dangerous fallacy when the task of translation is restricted to the conveyance and communication of meanings. This is a trap that we may wittingly or unwittingly fall into (in the field of Translation Studies) as long as we stay within the metaphysics of Platonism.

However, the letter-oriented theory of translation aims to rehabilitate the sensual and tries to receive (and to even revive), within the target language, many different elements of the source language. Therefore, it acknowledges the plurality and multiplicity of the other, receives the other as it is, and enjoys its difference. After all, it pursues the "logic of difference," that is, the "logic of the other" (*logique de l'autre*). Nevertheless, this is not a reductionist logic that claims everything is translatable. Instead, the starting point of Berman's theory is first and foremost the acknowledgement that there exist irreducibles and that individual natural languages differ from one another radically. When we say that a thing in a language is irreducible in another, we are pointing out the uniqueness of that language and providing an opportunity for it to assert itself. When a language admits that it cannot refer to its matters of fact or its world adequately, other languages can provide assistance. In this sense, they are good and desirable in themselves, and translation is nothing but an encounter between two languages according to the principle of their reciprocity. At this point, we cannot address the question of how such encounters between many actual languages are made and should be made. After all, we have to keep our precarious balance between preserving the irreducibles in a language and opening ourselves up to make the foreign our own. This is the crux of Berman's theory of translation that tries to pioneer a modern theory of translation without Platonism.

[29] Benjamin, W. "The task of the translator: An introduction to the translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens", in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, Routledge, 2000, p. 22.

REFERENCES

Benjamin, W. “La tâche du traducteur”, in *Walter Benjamin*, *Oeuvres I. Mythe et violence*, trans. by Maurice de Gandillac, Denoel/Les Lettres Nouvelles, 1921/1971.
Benjamin, W. “The task of the translator: An introduction to the translation of Baudelaire’s Tableaux Parisiens”, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, Routledge, 2000, pp. 15-23.
Berman, A. *L’épreuve de l’étranger: Culture et traduction dans l’Allemagne romantique*, Editions Gallimard, 1984.
Berman, A. “L’essence platonicienne de la traduction”, *Revue d'esthétique* 12, 1986, pp. 63-73.
Berman, A. *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, trans. by S. Heyvaert, State University of New York Press, 1992.
Berman, A. *La traduction et la lettre ou l’auberge du lointain*, Editions du Seuil, 1999.
Berman, A. “L’âge de la traduction - La tâche du traducteur de Walter Benjamin. Un commentaire”, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2008.
Deleuze, G. *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
Deleuze, G. *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton, Columbia University Press, 1993. (orig. French: *Différence et Répétition*, P.U.F, 1968)
Hegel, G. W. F. *Hegel’s Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art Vol. II*, trans. by T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1998.
Robinson, D. *Western Translation Theory: from Herodotus to Nietzsche*, St. Jerome Pub. 2002.
Ricoeur, P. *On Translation*, trans. by Eileen Brennan, Routledge, 2006. (orig. French: *Sur la traduction*, Bayard, 2004)
Schleiermacher, F. *Des différentes méthodes du traduire et autre texte*, trans. by Berman, Editions du Seuil, 1813/1999.
Steiner, G. *After Babel - aspects of language & translation*, Oxford University Press, 1975/1992/1998.
Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, intro. by Bertrand Russell, Routledge, 2003.

This work was supported by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund of 2010.

LEE Hyang – YUN Seong-Woo
110-890
Hyosung Jewelry City B-1509
Ineui-Dong 48-2, Jongro-Gu
Seoul
South Korea
e-mail: swyun2002@gmail.com